

Election Report

PAKISTAN / Legislative & Provincial Elections
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Background:

These elections were a historic occasion for Pakistan's democracy. For the first time ever, a civilian government had completed a full legislative period and relinquished power peacefully. Moreover, an interim government had for the first time been formed, while the Pakistan Election Commission (ECP) had been strengthened by improvements put in place by an ever more institutionalised parliamentary system. Since the previous elections, headway had been made in strengthening democracy and taking power away from the military. That said, this political transition has not been without suspicions of military involvement. It is believed that the military have backed those politicians least critical of it and ideologically closest to its viewpoints. In these elections 70,000 soldiers ensured security in those polling stations regarded as high-risk (44% of the more than 69,000 polling stations).

The elections were preceded by a wave of violence, primarily in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (hereafter referred to as K-P), Balochistan and the city of Karachi. This time it was not the habitual political violence between the rival factions and political parties, but instead the consequence of decisions made by the Pakistani Taliban (*Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan*, TTP), firstly that democracy is un-Islamic, and secondly about which parties would and would not be able to compete in the elections. The most affected parties were – due to their alliance with the US and their liberal policies - those in the sitting government: the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Awami National Party (ANP) and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). The ability of these three parties to carry out their election campaigns was severely restricted. The ANP was particularly affected, with several of its members, candidates and followers killed. The PPP, virtually leaderless, was plagued by the courts for corruption cases throughout its time in power. The judges have been particularly partial in this regard, pursuing infractions of the law on the basis of which political party they involved.

Quantitative indices of democracy:

Pakistan was classified in the following democratic performance rankings just before these elections:

Measurement	Name and year of report or database	Institution	Index	Points, ranking and classification
Political rights and freedom	Freedom House Report 2013	Freedom House (FH)	PR: political rights CL: civil liberties	PR: 4, CL: 5 (Scale of 1, free to 7, not free) Classification: Partially free
Consolidation of authoritarian and democratic institutions	Polity IV 2010	Center for International Development and Conflict Management, Univ. of Maryland	Democracy: consolidation of democratic institutions Autocracy: authoritarian consolidation Polity: synthesis of both	Democracy: +6 Autocracy: 0 Polity: +6 (Scale of +10, very democratic to -10, very authoritarian) Classification: Democratic

Perception of corruption	Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2012	Transparency International	TICPI: Perception of corruption index	TICPI: 27 points out of 100, (Scale of 0 very corrupt to 100 not at all corrupt) Ranking: 139 out of 174 countries
Democracy, including press status and corruption	World Democracy Audit Nov. 2012	World Audit	World Democracy Rank: political freedom (FH) + press and corruption (TI)	World Democracy Ranking: 112 out of 150 countries, Division 4 out of 4
Management of Political and Economic Change	Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2012	Bertelsmann Foundation	MI: Management Index, quality of change management	MI: 3.18 out of 10. Ranking: 112 out of 128 countries Classification: Failed

Definition of the electoral and party systems:

Pakistan uses a mixed parallel electoral system, its representatives being elected via two different systems. On the one hand a single-member simple majority system (First-past-the-post) is used for 272 general seats. On the other, a proportional representation list system is used for the 70 seats reserved for women and religious minorities. Calculating the seats for each system is done independently. Whereas the majority system is used in small constituencies, the proportional system is applied to provinces and to the whole country. To complicate matters further, at the same time as the National Assembly elections are held (342 seats), four provincial assemblies also hold their elections (728 seats altogether), all using the double electoral system too.

Pakistan's is a multiparty system. More than 250 parties registered before the ECP for 2013's elections. Until these elections there were two dominant parties, making it a two-party system: the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz Sharif faction). The Muslim League is splintered into several factions, among which are: Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q), the Functional Pakistan Muslim League (PML-F) and the Zia-ul-Haq Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Z). This time saw the emergence of Imran Khan's Justice Movement (*Pakistan Tehrik-e Insaf*, PTI) which campaigned as if it were going to win the elections, and ultimately scored the - by no means trivial - position of second in number of votes and third in number of seats in the National Assembly, thereby shattering the prevailing two-party system.

Impact of the electoral formula and constituency size on the elections

The Pakistani electoral system is influenced by the swing factor/ effect which is characteristic of first past the post or winner takes all systems. The simple majority method when applied to single-member constituencies leads voters to opt more for the candidate of their choice than for the party that a candidate represents. Seats can thus be won by the slimmest of margins and minorities can be left without representation. In addition to this, candidates at a local level are usually members of the powerful – either feudal or industrialist -

family clans that control the area. Parties offer their tickets to these powerful figures, rather than to the grassroots party members. The political affiliation of these local notables is generally fickle, which brings about the swing effect.

Constituencies in rural Pakistan moreover, usually correspond to the large estates and landholdings of the feudal families who continue to control the country's farming areas. This affects the rural vote: farm labourers usually vote for the landowner, and may indeed be obliged to do so.

Results:

The results of the provincial assembly elections, in which 10,958 candidates ran for office (2.7% women) were as follows.

Party	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan
All Pakistan Muslim League (APML)	1	0	0	0
Awami Jamhuri Ittehad Pakistan (AJIP)	4	0	0	0
Awami National Party (ANP)	4	0	0	1
Bahawalpur National Awami Party (BNAP)	0	1	0	0
Balochistan National Party (BNP)	0	0	0	2
Independents (IND)	10	5	1	2
Jamaat-e Islami (JI)	8	1	0	0
Jamaat-e Ulema-e Islam (F) (JUI-F)	15	1	0	8
Jamote Qaumi Movement (JQM)	0	0	0	1
Majlis-e Wahdat-e Muslimin Pakistan (MWMP)	0	0	0	1
Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)	0	0	48	0
National Party (NP)	0	0	0	10
National Peoples Party (NPP)	0	0	2	0
Pakistan Muslim League (PML)	0	8	1	6
Pakistan Muslim League (F) (PML-F)	0	0	10	0
Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N)	16	294	6	17
Pakistan Muslim League (Z) (PML-Z)	0	2	0	0
Pakistan National Muslim League (PNML)	0	1	0	0
People's Party of Pakistan (PPP)	4	6	90	0
Pakistan Tehrik-e Insaaf (PTI)	45	26	4	0
Pakhtun-khwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP)	0	0	0	14
Qaumi Watan Party (QWP)	8	0	0	0
IND	10	5	1	2
Seats available in these elections *	99	297	130	51
Total seats in assemblies**	115	345	162	62

Source: Pakistan Election Commission

* These are the general seats, available in these elections.

** Total, including reserved seats.

The number of Pakistanis enrolled to vote rose by 5 million. The percentage of women enrolled to vote are as follows: Balochistan 42.6%, Sindh 44.6%, Punjab 43.7%, Islamabad 46%, FATA 34.2%, KP 42.8%. Total: 43.6%.

	2008	2013
Balochistan	4,365,274	3,336,659
Sindh	19,506,473	18,963,375
Punjab	44,500,257	49,259,334
Islamabad	482,801	625,964
FATA	1,280,365	1,738,313
Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	10,661,212	12,266,157
Total	80,796,382	86,189,802

The provisional results of the National Assembly elections, in which 4,761 candidates (2.9% women) are as follows:

	FATA	Islamabad	Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Total seats*	Ind.**
	12	2	43	183	75	17	272	
Parties	Seats per province							
PML-N	2	1	6	158	3	6	124	19
PPP	0	0	0	3	37	0	33	0
PTI	1	0	18	9	1	0	23	0
MQM	0	0	0	0	22	0	18	0
JUI-F	1	0	5	0	0	5	9	0
PML-F	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	0
PMAP	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0
JI	0	0	4	0	0	0	3	0
NPP	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0
PML-Q	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
ANP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
BNP	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
QWP-S	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
PML-Z	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
NP	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
AMLP	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
AJIP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
APML	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
IND	6	0	0	2	0	0	8	0
TOTAL	10	1	37	176	71	16	236	19

Source: Pakistan Election Commission

* There were 272 general seats available in these elections, plus 60 reserved seats for women and 10 for minorities. This leaves 36 seats to be assigned.

** Ind refers to those independent candidates who have won seats and who may either remain independent or join one or another political party.

Qualitative analysis of the elections

Participation:

These elections saw an increase in the number of voters who turned out at polling stations, rising from 44% in 2008 to 55%. Possibly in defiance of the TTP (Taliban), possibly due to the mobilisation of young people (it is estimated that 47% of the electorate is aged between 18 and 35), or maybe because the population wanted to be part of this historic moment and back the democratic system. The turnout rate however, did vary between provinces and at a constituency level. The highest percentage, 84.77%, was recorded in Bahawalnagar (NA-191 district) while the lowest, 11.57% was in South Waziristan (NA-42 district). Turnout by provinces was as follows: Balochistan 43% (31% in 2008), Sindh 54% (44% in 2008), Punjab 60% (48% in 2008), Islamabad 62% (50% in 2008), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) 36% (31% in 2008) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 45% (34% in 2008).

The turnout rate was positive, although the fact that it was much lower in those areas plagued by violence should not be overlooked. It is also worrying to see that in some constituencies women had difficulties casting their vote. In others still, they were prohibited from doing so. This was the case in Dir district, where representatives of the PTI, JI, PML-N, ANP and PPP all reached an

agreement to prohibit women from voting. What is worrying is that so-called liberal parties took part in this pact. Worst of all is the fact that the PEC forbids such pacts.

Nor should it be forgotten that Pakistan's turnout rates continue to be estimations, due to the fact that a census has not been carried out since 1998 (the census is done every ten years, but was not carried out in 2008). Population data is established by the the National Database and Registration Authority. This year there were not as many problems as in other elections, when the electoral roll had millions of missing names, double entries and phantom voters. Lastly, it should be remembered that some areas of Pakistan do not take part in legislative elections. These include Gilgit-Baltistan (part of the disputed area of Kashmir, 6 constituencies) and Free Kashmir (8 constituencies) which together have a population close to 6 million (unofficial estimation).

Competition:

These elections were particularly competitive. The Electoral Commission registered 250 political parties. The number of candidates was high: 4,671 for the National Assembly and 10,958 for the provincial assemblies. However, deteriorating security limited the parties' ability to compete on an equal footing. The campaign of terror undertaken by the TTP impeded the parties of the outgoing government - the PPP, ANP and MQM - from campaigning and from organising big electoral rallies. The ANP was only able to campaign in small groups, almost without prior announcement. The PPP for its part, has for some time now been the object of judicial activism, which has brought the corrupt nature of the party to light. Although not without justification, the PPP is not the only institution with cases outstanding before the courts. In the lead-up to the election, for example, the Supreme Court ousted two PPP prime ministers, Yousuf Raza Gillani (in June 2012) and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf (in March 2013). In this sense, the party is lacking leadership: President Asif Ali Zardari continues to be very unpopular, while his son, the party's leader, Bilawal Bhutto, has not been able to enter Pakistan due to security threats, meaning he has had to campaign via videoconference from Dubai. The MQM has been another of the TTP's targets, as it is the only party that openly opposes them. These parties have been subject to 37 (ANP), 12 (PPP), 12 (MQM) terrorist attacks since January.

Those who did hold mass rallies were Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) and Imran Khan (PTI), ignoring the attacks against the other political parties – a strategy that did not prevent them from undergoing such attacks themselves, with 10 and 5 incidents respectively. One idiosyncrasy of this election campaign was the emergence of Tahir ul-Qadri, leader of *Minhaj ul-Quran* and the party Pakistan Awami Tehreek, who with a revolutionary spirit called on the army to intervene and put an end to “electoral dictatorship”. Qadri held several massive protests, all of them well-orchestrated by a good marketing team, in which he called for the dissolution of the assemblies and a change of the Electoral Commission. Pervez Musharraf also returned from his self-imposed exile. After attempting to register as a candidate in several constituencies and finally being accepted in the area of Chitral, he was turned down and barred from politics for life. He was then placed under house arrest in Islamabad, due to charges he faces in several cases before the courts. Despite boycotting the elections, his party however, did

manage to win one seat in the National Assembly and another in the K-P provincial assembly.

For the first time in history, political parties competed in the FATA, where until 2011 the law stipulated that only independent candidates were allowed to run. For the first time also, a woman ran for election in this province. Yet at a national level, the percentage of female candidates is still very low: 2.9% for the National Assembly and 2.7% for the provincial assemblies. Women generally complain of insufficient security in politics.

Transparency:

These elections were more transparent than the previous ones. Local and international observers admitted as much. The improvement is the result of a long process initiated under the previous government. Both Parliament and the PEC have attempted to improve the freeness and fairness of the electoral process. There has been greater cooperation among political parties in undertaking reforms. Three amendments to the constitution were passed, improving the parliamentary system, the makeup of the PEC and its neutrality. Political leaders have displayed greater maturity and moderation than in the past. The system whereby power is handed to a caretaker government following the dissolution of the parliament (March 2013) was modified and improved. While consensus did not exist between the government and the opposition over the appointment of a caretaker prime minister, the appointment of the PEC was accepted. Furthermore, the appointment of the new head of the PEC, Fakhruddin Ibrahim, was unanimously approved.

The PEC launched a programme of electoral reform with the cooperation of the political parties and civil society. Codes of conduct were approved for candidates, parties, observers and members of the PEC. A further positive step was the coordination between the commission and the National Database and Registration Authority to improve the electoral roll – the source of so many problems in the 2008 elections. During its term in office the previous government also established a program for the issuance of electronic national identity documents (Smart National Identity Cards, SNIC), which assisted in checking voter data. In fact, it was possible to check the votes cast digitally with the SNIC. A service was also set up that allowed voters to check the electoral roll via SMS to find out their registration number, their polling station and whether they needed to provide any further information. In this way 37.2 million names were eliminated from the roll and another 36.7 million names added.

Nevertheless, there were cases of electoral fraud and serious violations of the electoral code, particularly in Karachi. The usual reports of chaos in polling stations, huge turnout of voters at some polling stations, as well as political and terrorist violence, affected the fairness of the elections, even if generally speaking, a considerable improvement was noted. The PEC admitted the allegations of fraud and collaborated actively with the courts to resolve them.

Representation and debate:

The major problem with Pakistan's political parties is the strong personalisation of their operations and the excessive presence of family clans (clientelism). If the data concerning the candidates in these elections is

compared to that of the last elections, one can observe the presence of the same families, who end up ruling the majority of constituencies, with many areas coming under the control of family clans. In fact, there are cases in which members of the same family ran as candidates for different parties. Such constituencies are practically inherited from fathers to sons. However, Pakistani society is undergoing a transformation and the rise of an urban population (it is calculated that at least 40% of the population now live in urban areas of at least 5,000 inhabitants) and of a younger population (60% of Pakistanis are under the age of 35) is leading the old electoral dynamics to change.

Terrorism did affect representation in these elections. The TTP's attacks, particularly on the ANP, reduced this party's activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The fact that the party's political rivals showed a lack of solidarity and remained silent instead of condemning the attacks, points to a serious problem. Their silence at the death of other candidates and the attacks on party rallies, came about not only out of fear but also electoral strategy. If Pakistan's politicians wish to continue strengthening the democratic process, they will have to show more solidarity in the future and unite against terrorism, which is a serious issue affecting them all.

The key issues in the campaign were the economy, the lack of energy, insecurity, corruption, unemployment and development. There was a disturbing silence when it came to condemning attacks on minorities, particularly on the Shi'ite minority. For religious minorities, elections are almost a nonevent. The Ahmadis have been kicked out of politics by the obligation to register on a separate electoral roll, which for fear of identification they are too afraid to do.

Openness:

These elections promised to be particularly open, indeed much more so than previous elections. For the first time ever, a party leader, namely Imran Khan, was sufficiently popular to pose a challenge to two-party politics. His popularity furthermore, was inversely proportional to the unpopularity of the sole visible head of the PPP, Asif Ali Zardari. In the absence of Bilawal Bhutto, Imran seemed to be the most attractive choice.

There have been several surprises. One is the sheer magnitude of the votes given to Nawaz Sharif, who did far better than expected. Another is the disappointment of Khan's supporters, who expected him to win. He did win the second highest number of votes, ahead of the PPP, but these converted into the third highest number of seats. Another surprise was the PPP's losses nationwide – the party lost nearly 90 seats, going from 120 seats in 2008 to 31 in these elections.

Significance:

These elections were hugely relevant for Pakistan's history because they showed for the first time ever that the curse of toppled governments and coup d'états could and can be broken. Although the previous government's term could have been much better than it was, democratic institutionalisation has been notable and little by little it has been recovering its lost power – traditionally usurped by the military. The political maturity of the country's leaders shows that they have learned from their past errors. While unbridled optimism is still

inadvised, it can be argued that the tide has turned. This will be very positive for the country if these advances are consolidated.

One point that was highlighted in these elections is the regionalisation of voting patterns. Punjab voted PML-N, Sindh for the PPP, Karachi voted MQM, Balochistan mainly for nationalists and Islamists, KP and the FATA for a Pashtun party. For now, there is not one political party that presents a federal vision for Pakistan.

Consequences and impact on the political system

This is a crucial moment for the new government of Nawaz Sharif. The problems it faces are very serious. Only a stable administration will be able to carry out the measures that are necessary for improving a bankrupt economy. The problem is partly an energy one. Indeed, energy supplies have been the cause of many, often-violent, protests. Power cuts of up to 15 hours a day and a lack of fuel are one of Pakistanis' main concerns.

Sharif has shown a conciliatory approach and a mature attitude, not locking horns with the opposition. Such prudence will be necessary, given that the PPP still has a majority in the Senate. In this respect it has been Imran Khan who has made the most belligerent declarations. The PPP is undergoing a period of introspection which can only strengthen the party if it is willing to recognise its corruption-related issues, the need for fresh leadership, the departure of the highly unpopular Zardari, as well as reflection on the role of the Bhutto family in the party.

International political reaction

Sharif has come out in support of good relations with India, so as to improve Pakistan's economy, promote trade and regional stability. This positive and conciliatory stance has led India to applaud his move, albeit with a reasonable degree of caution. In Kabul the attitude is also one of wariness. This a key moment for both countries in light of the withdrawal of international troops from Afghan soil in 2014. Relations with the United States, with which Pakistan has a very damaged relationship, need to be better. President Obama congratulated the Pakistanis on having been able to bring about a peaceful political transition and has announced a change in his policy on drone strikes. Although Sharif was not the ideal candidate for the Americans, due to the relations both his brother and other members of his party maintain with a number of sectarian and terrorist groups, not to mention his Islamist past, both sides will have to reach an agreement in order to address their priorities for 2014.

China has expressed its interest in helping Pakistan commercially. Saudi Arabia, whose government has long maintained friendly relations with Sharif, could be another ally for improving the economy, as well as an energy supplier.

Conclusion

These elections have been a step forward in the history of democracy in Pakistan and in its institutionalisation. Undoubtedly it has been Pakistan's citizens who by turning out to vote in large numbers, have shown their support for continuing with the democratic system, in spite of its shortcomings. The Taliban's violence has divided the political spectrum between liberals and conservatives, which is a worrying trend in light of the ambiguous stance taken on the attacks by the conservatives and a good number of liberals. In voting for Nawaz Sharif, Pakistanis have gone for a familiar face, who represents for them a businessman, from the industrial class – as opposed to the landowning class which is better embodied by the PPP. They believe he will better ensure the progress of their country, which in recent years has seen the aspirations of a younger and more urban population ruined by violence and the economic crisis.

Sharif, who will be the only prime minister to have been elected for a third term in office (both his previous terms were in the 1990's) has some major problems on his plate and at a particularly complicated time for the country and the wider region. But he can count on the legitimacy of a parliamentary majority which at the very least should grant him a stable term in office. Three additional changes of personnel later this year - the end of the mandates of the president, the head of the Supreme Court and the head of the military – will configure the power-structure that will rule Pakistan, if all goes well and smoothly, for the next five years.

Reference to other online analyses of the elections

1. The European Union Electoral Observation Mission report published 1 July 2013 and available at: <http://www.eueom.eu/eu-eom-pakistan-2013/home>
2. General Election 2013: FAFEN Observation Key Findings and Recommendations. Free and Fair Elections Network (FAFEN), published 1 July 2013 and available at: <http://www.fafen.org/>